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(KĀMARUPA ANUSANDHAN SAMITI.)

EDITED BY

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Mina Nath and Gorokha Nath—the original preachers of the cult have been traced from the 1st Century A. D.* to the 11th Century A. D. with their places of origin from Jalandhar to Kamrup.

Tantricism is supposed to have had its origin in Kamrup. But how the Meithis or the Manipuris with a disputed origin and history came about this mythology is itself a myth, though it may be tempting to suggest that there might have been some influence of the Indus Valley or of Mithraism.

Whatever, it may be, from what has been said above, it is clear that the Bull-head as a sacred thing might have been introduced into Nathism through the direct influence of Mahenjo-daro cult or through Mithraism; and Nathism may reasonably claim to have an old lineage.

* In 'Sankara Vijayam'—a book written by Madhavacharyya (published from Calcutta by Ramkrishna Vidya Bhusan in 1290 B. S.) Sankaracharyya's disciple Sanandan speaks to his Guru (in Chapter IX. Stanza 80)—“In ancient times, a Yogi named Matseyandra ordered his disciple Gorokh Nath to take charge of his body”—

“मत्स्येन्द्रनामा हिपुरा महात्मा-गोरक्ष मादिश्य निजोऽंगं गुप्त्यै ।”

Sankaracharyya being of 8th century A. D. “ancient times”—refers to a date far prior to that.

A lot has been published on the subject even in J. A. R. S. and this note is only an addition from another authority.—R. M. N.

THE KALITAS.

(BY SRIJIT GAURIKANTA TALUKDAR B. L.)

We have read with great interest the article of S. J. Kali Ram Medhi, M. A., published in the Journal of the Assam Research Society (Vol. III, No. 3) on the Kalitas and we have admired him for the trouble he has taken in collecting and putting together the scattered materials in support of the theory that the forefathers of the Kalitas were the first batch of the Aryans who colonised Assam and gave her her civilization. Many Western and Eastern scholars have come to this conclusion long ago. S. J. Sani Ram Bora in his “Asamar Purani Itihas” (Ancient History of Assam) has discussed this matter elaborately and has

Dr. Pran Nath surmises that the Bull-head sign being simplified developed into the Tripundra (Tridant) symbol, and later on mixing with the symbol of 'Ge' and 'Irra'—the female and male deities respectively of creative powers on the earth,—represented generally by two snakes—assumed the symbol of the Lingam worship as we see in the present day—the first representing 'Lingam' and the second—the "Yoni".

Apart from this, there is another source—which has not been tapped by Dr. Pran Nath in which we find some significance of a Bull's head:—"Mithraism was a development of Zoroastrianism—a religion of very ancient Aryan origin, traceable back to the Indo-Iranian people before they split into Persians and Hindus. Mithras was a God of light, a sun of Righteousness, and in the shrines of the cult he was always represented as slaying a sacred Bull—whose blood was the seed of life".(1) Again, "Mithras is invariably represented in the form of a youth with conical cap and flying drapery, slaying a Bull by plunging a dagger into its side * * * —Mithra slaying the sacred Bull from which inspite of the powers of darkness springs the life of earth" (2)

Many of the Copper-plate inscriptions of Kāmarupa of 8th to 10th Centuries A.D. are found to begin with a mysterious symbol represented in different places in slightly different ways. Pandit Padmanath Vidyavinode explains this symbol as 'Anji' of the Tantras and explains its different forms as—'S' meaning left side, 'q' right side and 'δ' both ways dancing postures respectively of "Kundalini" of the serpentine form in her upward or downward march (3) It appears that these three symbols combined together will represent the Indus Valley Bull-head Symbol.

An explanation of the Bull-head being considered as a sacred thing is found in a book called "Anadi Puran" a manuscript in Bengali—found several years back in the possession of a Nath-Yogi of the Cachar District. The book is supposed to be a sacred book of the Nath-Panthis. A synopsis of this book was published in the Journal of the Bengali-Literary society of Bengal (Sahitya Parishad Patrika) Vol. XXXI, part II, 1331 B.S. in an article on

(1) H. G. Well's—Outlines of History—page 498.

(2) Chambers's Encyclopaedia Vol. VII—page 240.

(3) J. A. R. S. Vol. I, page 11, foot note.

"Cosmogony in Nathism" (Nath-Dharma-Shrithi Tatta—नाथधर्म-सृष्टितत्त्व) written by the present writer (5). The story briefly is this :— The Supreme Infinite Spirit Aleknath first lived in the fathomless void, and later on created by desire—one Anadi-Dharma-Nath—a male, and one Kaketuka Devī a female. From the combination of Anadi and Kaketuka, the Sun, the Moon and the Earth, and then Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva were created. Having apportioned different duties of creation, preservation and destruction to Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva—respectively, Anadi Nath went southwards, and on the shore of the southern sea created a banyan tree (similar to Mithraic Fig tree) and a vulture (similar to the raven of Mithraism), and then assuming the form of a dead Bull began to float a-drift in the Southern Sea.

Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva began to search for their father and getting a clue from the vulture went southwards and set themselves in deep meditation on the edge of the sea. The dead Bull (Go-Munda) came floating down past Brahma, Vishnu and Śiva. The first two nauseated at the sight of the clumsy thing, but Śiva, wise as he was, at once recognised the father, took him ashore and cremated him in a funeral pyre. While the Bull was being burnt, different Siddhas sprang from its different parts :—

“शिरोदेशे भवेत् गोर्खा मुखोद्गहनः सम्भवः ।

हृदये मेघनाथश्च नामिमूले च पिनाकः ॥

उदरे जागलजातः अनुमध्ये च पागलः ।

बाहुभ्यां भृकटिनाथः सत्यनाथश्च गुह्यकात् ॥

चरणे बिन्दुनाथश्च नवनाथः प्रकीर्तितः ॥”

i. e. Gorakh Nath came out from the head Dahan Nath from the mouth, Megh Nath from the heart, Pinaka from the navel, Jagala from the stomach, Pagala from the thighs, Bhrikati Nath from the fore legs, Satya Nath from the anus and the Bindu Nath from the hind legs. In another place, it is mentioned that the navel which could not be burnt was thrown into the water and it was eaten up by a big fish from whom Mina Nath was born.

Then again, the clothes of the Siddhas that sprang like this were tinged red with the blood of the ‘Go-Munda’, and the ashes

5 The article was discussed in a monthly sitting of the Society and was commented on by Dr. B. M. Barua, Pandit A. C. Vidya Bhushan and late Mr. R. D. Banerjee. Their criticisms were published in the same issue.

that the civilization which the ancestors of the Kalitas brought into Assam is Vedic in origin as found in the Vedic Literature. That being so, it is difficult to understand how Sj. Medhi can call the Kalitas Non-Vedic Aryans.

Another point on which we have to disagree from Sj. Medhi is his remark that "in all probability the Kalitas were not Kshatriya". The only grounds advanced by him in support of his assertion are :—(a) "The characteristics of the Kalitas hardly support this view (viz., to connect the Kalitas with the Kshatriyas)", and (b) "Nobody will now believe, for a moment, the Parasurama story".

Now as regards the first ground we find that Sj. Medhi has not given his readers any idea as to what in his opinion are the characteristics of the Kshatriyas. If he really found any Kshatriya characteristics wanting in the Kalitas he ought to have pointed them out—instead of making a vague remark. But as a matter of fact it is futile to find out any special characteristics of any caste, as caste is not a natural division but an artificial and arbitrary distinction. But if Sj. Medhi means fighting habit to be a Kshatriya characteristic—then he himself has practically admitted the Kalitas to be Kshatriyas when he said in his article that the Kalita army of Kamarupa once conquered Bengal, Kalinga and Kosala. Assam history also tells us that the Kalitas were good warriors.

His other ground is that the Parasurama story is not now believable for a moment. But this story is not a matter that can be so lightly brushed aside. The broad story is that once in old days Parasurama, a brahmin warrior fought several fierce fights with the Kshatriyas and ultimately totally defeated them and compelled them to leave their homes and take shelter in the jungles and outskirts of the country. And that the Kshatriyas for safety had to conceal their caste and take to Non-Kshatriya occupations. The story further goes to say that the forefathers of the Kalitas of Assam were those Kshatriyas who for safety entered into Assam and concealed their original caste and became at first known as Kul-lupta (caste-hidden). And in course of time the word *Kullupta* was reduced to its present form 'Kalita'. This is a universally admitted tradition in Assam. And so Mr. Mc. Swiney in the census Report of India (Vol. III, p. 132) has rightly recorded this tradition and said—"The popular explanation is that the Kalitas are Kshatriyas who fleeing from the wrath of Parasurama concealed their caste and their persons in the jungles of Assam and were thus called Kullupta." This tra-

MOHENJO-DARO AND MITHRAIC INFLUENCE ON NATHISM

(BY R. M. NATH, B.E.)

—O—

The hieroglyphic inscriptions found in the amulets and seals in Mohenjo-daro in the Indus Valley generally begin with the symbol of a Cow's or Bull's head.

In an attempt to decipher the inscription of the Indus-Valley amulets, Dr. Pran Nath reads the Bull-head sign as UG, UGA, GAU, and comes to the conclusion that the Indus-Valley Bull-head sign, "probably refers to (1) the King, the Lord or the Lady of the heavenly house, (2) the Lord of Lords, (3) the Lord of Dharma (law), (4) the Light or the Jewel of the heavenly house or world (Go-lo-ka)"*. He further surmises that "God Śiva was worshipped in Egypt as a Bull representing the Sun; the Goddess of heaven—the female companion of God Śiva or the Sun, representing the Moon as a cow. It was a belief among the Egyptians that the dead could go to Heaven by catching and holli- ing the tail of the Bull or the Sun and thus crossing the pool of water or say—the Vantaram River."

"The Sun's female counterpart,—the Moon,—was represented by Sumerians as a cow. In the Sumerian language the Moon-Goddess is called "Sin". The people who worshipped the Moon Goddess as their Supreme Deity replaced the Bull of ŚIVA by the cow of the Moon for crossing the black water;—hence arose the practice of giving a cow to a Brahman after the death of a man so that by catching her tail he might be able to go to the other side of the dark river and thus reach "Go-lo-ka" i.e. Heaven."†

It is assumed that the "Aryans before they separated from their kinsmen around the Aegean sea, Sumier and Akkad met with the cow—perhaps the first docile animal that was of great use to them, and that is why she was a favourite and a sacred animal—being considered as the God sent gift, and was worshipped profusely in the Rigveda—the most ancient religious book of the Hindus. Even to this day, the cow plays an important part in every day life and every religious function—beginning from marriage to death—of a Hindu.

* Vide Illustrated Weekly. Nov. 3, 1935, page 35.

Ibid-page 69.

supported the theory by satisfactory evidence. Recently Rai Bahadur Sj. Kanak Lal Barua, B. L., a minister to the Government of Assam, also, in his great work 'Early History of Kamarupa' has arrived at the same conclusion. But none have, to our knowledge tried so thoroughly and supported so successfully the theory by tracing the religious and social customs and ceremonies, the dress and ornaments, and the occupations, etc., so peculiar to the Assamese Hindus to their originals to be found in the Vedic Literature and by showing that they were introduced in Assam by the fore-fathers of the Kalitas,

Sj. Medhi has endeavoured to show that the ancestors of the Kalitas entered into Assam from the North through Tibet and over the passes of the Himalaya's. We cannot say how far he has succeeded in his attempt. But we find him disavouring the current theory of their entry from the West on the ground that the "Satapatha Brahman" tells that immigration of Aryans into Assam is very recent". But this does not seem to be a very convincing ground. To us it is more probable that the ancestors of the Kalitas entered into India from the West, settled in Upper India and ultimately entered into ancient Kamarupa either being driven onwards by subsequent immigrants or in search of better lands for living. And those amongst them who did not like to proceed eastwards entered into and settled in the Outtack Tributary Mahals, Sambalpur, Banai Districts, Tons Valley, Jaumsar, Bawar and other places of Upper and Central India where the descendents of those people till now bear the same name Kalita and resemble the Kalitas of Assam in many respects.

It will not be out of place to refer here to what Sj S. C. Goswami, B. A. B. T., Inspector of Schools has said about the migration of the Kalitas into Assam in his article, "The Kalitas of Kamarupa" published in the same Journal of the Assam Research Society (Vol I, No. 3). There Sj. Goswami has attempted to connect the Kalitas which the ancient "Kulutas" who according to various Puranas and several Greek Accounts of India were a powerful race dominating over the country from Kashmir to Karatoya and had kings who struck gold coins. Sj. Goswami also notes that "it is difficult to explain how and why the Kulutas had to relinquish the whole of the Himalayan foothills from Kashmir to Nepal, sink into insignificance and ultimately came to live in the far eastern nook of India". "Of course", continues Sj. Goswami, "such fluctuations in the fortunes of people are not unknown to history; and in the absence of any

further data we have to assume that the Kulutas were driven by some unknown enemy to farther east where gradually they lost their former importance; but retained much of their customs and culture, appropriate to the higher social stratum of the Aryans." And we think it will not be altogether unreasonable if one ventures to suggest that this "some unknown enemy" were none but the powerful Parasurama of the Pauranic fame and the people he commanded, who fought dreadful fights with the ancestors of the Kalitas and compelled them to be scattered in various outskirts of the country referred to above.

Now whether one agrees or not with Sj. Goswami in connecting the Kalitas with the ancient Kulutas it will seem clear from what he has said that the forefathers of the Kalitas entered from the West and gradually marched or were driven towards the East. This theory also goes to give a satisfactory answer to Sj. Medhi's query,—“How the Kalitas got into these outlying places (Viz., Cuttack Tributary Mahals, Sambalpur, Banai Districts, Tons Valley, Jaunsar, Bawar, err.) And the reasons suggested above by us for the Kalitas being scattered over the outlying parts of the country—are probably more probable than those advanced by Sj. Medhi in his article, viz., —“that the Kalitas of Kamrup pushed them towards the West and South-West”, or “that they were the descendents of the Kamarupa army who conquered Bengal, Kalinga, and Kosala” or “that they were stragglers from the main body of Aryan immigrants.”

Another matter that requires consideration is Sj. Medhi's assertion that “the Kalitas were Non-Vedic Aryans.” Sj. Medhi in his article has attempted to establish that “Assam is the home of Kalitas and its civilization is pre-eminently a Kalita civilization. The other sub-castes follow the Kalita social laws and customs in their entirety.” In support of his assertion he has said that “traces of some at least of the ancient social laws and customs of the Aryans, which are still current in Assam, may be gleaned from Vedic Literature.” In going to illustrate his proposition Sj. Medhi has singled out several instances of religious and social customs and ceremonies, dress and ornaments, etc., peculiar to the Kalitas of Assam. And after tracing their equivalents in the Vedic Literature Sj. Medhi has made the following observation: “The above characteristics indicate an Assamese civilisation which is similar to that of the Vedic Indian. The linguistic considerations as also the manners and customs referred to above are nowhere to be found in India. They seem to show that the Kalitas are the earliest Aryan settlers in Assam.” The substance of what Sj. Medhi says is

of the funeral pyre were besmeared all over their bodies. Gorakh Nath was given a red cap.

Thus it appears that the Bull-head or the Dead Bull played an important part in the origin of the Naths, and bears a striking resemblance to the Bull of Mithraism, which was the fountain-head of all creation.

Incidentally, it is very interesting to note that the Meithis ~~re~~ the Manipuris of the Manipur State in Assam—have an almost similar mythology in their book—"Bijoy-Panchali"—Atia-Guru-Sidaba—(the supreme spirit of the universe)—having finished his creations, assumed the form of a dead cow and floated down the Bijoy Nadi (Bijoy river—present Imphal river); he was brought ashore by his son Sentreng (Sun), and his different parts were divided amongst the seven chiefs of the seven important clans of the country †. The blood of the animal that was left on the ground gave birth to Durba grass, and that which was sprinkled on the trees near by produced resin and the ashes produced 'til' seeds—all very pure articles required in every sacred function ‡.

From the above, it appears that the Indus Valley people considered the head of a bull or a cow as a sacred thing; in Mithraism a dead bull was the fountain-head of all creation; the sacred symbols of the Tantra period may be construed as different parts of a bull head; in Nathism the sacred father assumed the form of a dead bull from whom sprang all the Siddhas; and lastly in Meithism of Manipur a dead bull played a very holy part being the representation of the Almighty Father.

Mohenjo-daro is in the Indus Valley and its civilisation is traced back to somewhere near 3000 B.C.; Mithraism is supposed to have had its origin in Persia in 68 B.C. commanding a vast following in the Roman Empire in the 2nd Century A.D.; and Nathism has got very disputed dates and places of origin.

* We have already spoken of a conical cap worn by Mithra in a previous paragraph, here Gorakh Nath gets a red cap; and mention of a similar cap is made by the French traveller Della Valle in the 16th Century in Malabar side—on the person of a Nath-Yogi—"He had a golden bead hanging from his ear as big as a musket bullet, and had a little red cap like those worn by Italian galley slaves"—J. T. Wheeler's "A short History of India, Burma & Nepal, pp 116—117".

† Vide Hudson's—The Meithis—page 100.

‡ Manuscript copy of Bijoy-Panchali.

dition has been recorded in Mr. Hunter's *Statistical Accounts of the District of Goalpara* also. This Parasurama story is also fully supported by the Mahabharata and several other Purans. The following sloka from the Mahabharata (Santi Parva) will be found to be of much interest.

गोमिः समुद्रेण तथा गोलाकुलसंनतैः ।

गुहापममयोद्धिवाः भ्रमियानां कुलोद्धवाः ॥

The substance of the sloka is that the people of the Kshatriya families for fear of Parasurama fled for safety and concealed themselves in tracts near the distant sea and in deep jungles where wild cows, monkeys, bears and other dangerous wild animals live.

Sj. Medhi finds it difficult to believe this story. He gives no reason but simply says—"nobody believe it"—probably meaning thereby that educated and enlightened men of today cannot believe such stories. But we can furnish him with names of a large number of educated men who are prepared to accept the underlying truth of this story. I quote below, for instance, what our revered Sj. Lakshmi Nath Bezbarua, B. A., the founder and late edita of Benhi has to say about this. "In my opinion the Koltas of this side (Sambalpur, etc) and the Kalitas of Assam are of the same class ; and they are the descendents of the Kshatriyas who for fear of Parasurama fled from their own country, scattered themselves, concealed their Kshatriya caste, took to cultivation and declared themselves as Krishan or cultivators. The current explanation that the word Kolita comes from Kullupta cannot be lightly treated". (Banhi, Vol. 14, No. 1 at page 27).

Thus we find that the Parasurama story has secured a permanent place in the Sanskrit literature of great antiquity and also on the lips the Assamese people in the shape of a tradition. And whether one is inclined to give it any historical value or not, he cannot deny that the tradition proves beyond any question the fact that the Kalitas are being said to belong to the Kshatriya stock from time immemorial.

Now let us ponder over and judge—what a tradition means. A tradition is an opinion of some society regarding certain facts verbally handed down from generation to generation. Now is there no element of truth behind a tradition ? In our opinion there is a substratum of history behind a tradition. And in the

Parasuram story also, though it might have been covered with some mist of exaggeration in its details, there is an element of truth behind it.

The Kshatriya origin of the Kalitas has been supported by a large number of other responsible and weighty authorities. The late renowned Pandit Jawala Prasad Misra Vidyabaridhi of Muradabad has placed the Kalitas in the Kshatriya group while classifying the different castes of Hindu India in his famous work **JATI-BHASKAR** published long ago. S. Sarat Chandra Goswami also in his interesting article referred to above has, after great discussion and deliberation, arrived at the conclusion that—"the Kalitas were of the Kshatriya stock originally "but took to other occupations afterwards." Rai Bahadur Padma Nath Gohain Barua, Govt. Literary Pensioner, Editor of 'Bijuli', 'Usha', and 'Banti',—writes in his "Assam Buranji"—"They (Kalitas) are known as Kalita (Kullupta) as they came down from the Kshatriya origin". So also Rai Bahadur S. Ananda Chandra Agarwala in his "Ancient Assam" and the famous historical novelist S. Rajani Kanta Bardoloi, retired E. A. C. in "ASSAM PRADIPKA" (Vol. I, No. 2) have arrived at the same conclusion that the Kalitas are Kshatriyas by origin.

In the face of all these facts and circumstances we believe it will not be just and fair for one to say like S. Medhi that "recently there has been a tendency to connect the Kalitas with the Kshatriyas".

A KĀMARUPA BRAHMAN IN KALINGA IN 700 A. D.

(BY : JOGENDRA CHANDRA GHOSH.)

Some years ago a *pujāri* of the Dharmalingeśvara temple near Gurandi, a village about 11 miles from Parlakamidi, Ganjam district, discovered, on digging up ground near the said temple, a copper-plate grant of Mahārāja Anantavarmā, son of Mahārāja Devendravarmā. The plates were first noticed in the *Report* for 1919-20 of the Assistant Superintendent of Archaeology for Southern India. They were then published in the *Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society* (Vol. II, pp. 271-76). The charter has since been noticed in the *History of Orissa* (Vol. I, pp. 282-88), in the *Early History of Kāmarūpa* (p. 168), and also in the *Dynasties of Medieval Orissa* (p. 89).

The charter was issued by king Anantavarmā, but the gift was actually made by his brother Jayavarmā, at the time of giving away his daughter, in marriage (*kanyā-dāna-samayē*). The donee is one Viṣṇusomācārya, a resident of Śṛṅgaṭikāgrahāra in the Kāmarūpa-*viṣaya*, belonging to the Pārāsaras *gotra* and well-versed in *Veda-vedāṅga*.

The grant is dated "*pravarddhamāna-vijaya-rājya-samvat-sara-satadvayē caturthare 204 Mārgasīrṣa-suklapakṣe trayo-dasyam*," i. e. in the (Gaṅga) year 204, on the thirteenth day of the bright half of the month of Mārgasīrṣa. We have shown elsewhere (*Ind. Ant.*, Vol. LXI 1932, pp. 237-38) that the initial date of the Gaṅga era is 496 A.D. According to this, the date corresponds to Sunday, 28th November, 700 A.D. This appears to be the earliest epigraphic record of the migration of a Brāhmaṇ of Eastern India, well-versed in *Veda-vedāṅga*, to other provinces.

There is the mention of Bādā *viṣaya*, in Kāmarūpa *maṇḍalā* in the *bhukti* of Prāgjyotiṣa, in the Kamauli grant of Vaidyadeva, of the twelfth century (E. I Vol. II. pp. 37 ff.). It is in the present charter, we hear of, for the first time, the Kāmarūpa-*viṣaya*. The donee's former residence, the agrahāra of Śṛṅgaṭikā lay in this Kāmarūpa-*viṣaya*. This Śṛṅgaṭikā has been identified with a village in the Tezpur district. (*Early History of Kāmarūpa*, p. 163 n). If this identification is correct, then at least some portion of the modern district of Tezpur must have been in Kāmarūpa proper, as early as the seventh century *. It may not be unlikely that the capital of Kāmarūpa at that time was in the neighbourhood. The district of Tezpur (Darrang) is said to contain many ancient remains.

The donee of the present grant bears the surname of *Soma*, which is to be found among some of the donees of the Nidhanpur charter of Bhāskaravarmā, though of different *gotras*. We have shown that these Brāhmaṇs were none other than the Nāgar Brāhmaṇs (*I.H.Q.* Vol VI. p. 68). We hope, we shall not be

From Yuan Chwang's account we find that towards the middle of the seventh century A.D. the eastern boundary of Kāmarūpa was a series of hills which reached as far as the confines of China. This indicates that the Kāmarūpa kingdom then included the whole of the modern Assam Valley. The "Śṛṅgaṭikā Agrahāra," which is to be identified with the modern Śiva temple at Singri (Singari), is to the west of Tezpur and east of Gauhati. It is however nearer to Tezpur than Gauhati. [Ed. J.A.R.S.]

wrong if we presume that Viṣṇusomācārya, the donee of the grant under discussion, also belonged to the same community of Brāhmaṇs. This shows that the early Kāmarūpa kings settled the Nāgar Brāhmaṇs, not only in Sylhet, but also in Kāmarūpa proper. That these Brāhmaṇs were patronized by later kings also will be borne out by the surnames of the donees of some of their charters, such as, *Dhara* (*Kāmarūpa-Śāsanāvalī*, pp. 78 p) ; *Datta* (*Ibid*, pp. 99-100) ; *Deva* (*Ibid*, pp. 111-2, and 137-8) ; and *Pāla* (*Ibid*, pp. 122-3). It will thus be seen that the Kāmarūpa Brāhmaṇs are not without an element of Nāgar Brāhmaṇs in them. †

BUDDHISM IN ASSAM.

(BY PANDIT PADMĀNATH BHATTACHARYA VIDYAVINOD M. A.)

I have always been of opinion that there was no Buddhism in Assam. That in the 7th century A. D. during the reign of Bhāskaravarman, there was no Buddhism in the great kingdom of Kāmarūpā, was certified by Yuān Chwāng, the Chinese traveller. In the Nidhanpur plates there is a verse in praise of Dharma, viz.

जयति जगदेवकवन्धु लोकद्वितयसऽ सम्पदो हेतुः परहित मूर्च्छिदृष्टः फलानु
मेवस्त्वितिघर्मः ।

In this there might be a covert reference to the Triratna of the Buddhists, to please the friendly Emperor Harṣavardhana who was famous for his Buddhistic propensity: the utmost that can be said on this is that Bhāskara was liberal-minded enough to show respect to Buddhism and in fact Yuan-Chwang also said

✓ † It may be surmised that these Brāhmaṇs were not Vedic Aryans but the Alpine priests who introduced culture and civilization throughout Eastern India before the entry of the Aryans into India. The Alpines originally came from Iran and introduced an Aryan language of the Pisāchi family which was the origin of Bihari, Bengali, Assamese and Oriya which are now classed as Indo-Aryan languages of the outer band. These languages are closely allied to the Indo-Aryan languages of the western coast the speakers of which are also Alpines by race. [Ed. J.A.R.S.]

that the king respected the Buddhists (Śramanas) as well as the Brāhmaṇas. In this connection we must not forget that one of the items of praise of Bhāskara was:—

“कलियुगपराक्रमाकलित विग्रहस्य समुद्भास ईवङ्गवतो धर्मस्य” (ll 45-46):
here the *real* meaning of Dharma has come out.

A very interesting article headed “Kāmarūpa and Vajrayāna” has been published by Rai Bahadur Kanaklāl Barua in vol ii, no. 2 (July 1934) of the Journal of the Assam Research Society, wherein the learned Rai-Bahadur surmises that “the Kamarupa Kings from Ratnapāla became Tāntrik Budhists or adherants of the system of Vajrayāna”. (I)

In neither of the copperplates' inscriptions of Ratnapāla granted in the 25th and the 36th year of his reign, nor in the inscriptions of his successors (Indrapāla and Dharmapāla) available upto date there is anything to corroborate the surmise as quoted above. On the other hand the sign *oṃji* occurs in the seal of Ratnapāla's second grant and in all of the inscriptions discovered hitherto of the successors of that monarch. The inscriptions in Indrapāla's second plates end in an epithet of the king as “हरगिरिजाचरण पङ्कजरजोरजितोत्तमाङ्ग”.⁽²⁾

From the inscriptions of the second grant of Dharmapāla there might be an inference made of the change of faith in the Donor (3), but this change was to Vaishnavism and never to Buddhism.

Meanwhile Great Śankarācāryya who swept Buddhism clear out of India flourished in the 9th. century A. D. In the course of his march of conquest he visited Kāmarūpa where he found as his adversary a Tāntrik named Abhinavagupta, instead of any Buddhist

The account of the donors of copper-plate grants takes us to the 12th century A. D. and after that the Muhammadans conquered Bengal and it is said that whatever remained of Buddhism after Śankara's conquest — was entirely demolished by the Mussalmans.

(1) p. 48, J. A. R. S. Vol. ii, no. 2.

(2) r. 140 Kāmarupa Śāsanāvali.

(3) *Vide* Kāmarūpa Śāsanāvali p. 170.

Buddhism was ~~thenceforward~~ an exiled religion and found shelter in Ceylon, Indo-Chinese peninsula, China, Tibet and Nepal (which had political connection with China). Some of the mountainous tribes North-East of the Brahmaputra Valley e.g. Bhutiyas and Khāntis are Buddhists, no doubt, but that is due to their connection with Tibet and Burma. The valley of the Brahmaputra i. e. Kāmarūpa never favoured the doctrines of the Buddha and "Bauddha" is an opprobrious term in the early Assamese Literature.

In his article referred to above the Rai Bahadur has quoted two passages from Sālhanamātā wherein Kāmākhyā (or Kāmārūpa) and Sirihatta (1) (or Srihatta) i. e. Sylhet, are mentioned and from this he infers "that both Kāmārūpa and Sylhet were undoubtedly centres of Vajrayāna at least when these two Sālhanas were composed." (2) I am sorry I do not see eye to eye with the Rai Bahadur here. In order to explain the matter, I should quote these extracts (from the Rai Bahadur's article (3); the one is:—

“ॐ सर्वबुद्ध डाकिनीये हं स्वाहुति मन्त्रेण पश्चात् वाम पार्श्वे ॐ वज्र
वर्णनीये हं स्वाहुति मन्त्रेण पश्चात् दक्षिण पार्श्वे ॐ वज्र वैरोचनीये हं स्वाहुति
अनेन पश्चात् पुनरपि उड्डियान पूर्णगिरि कामाख्या सिरिहट इत्यनेन पूजयेत् ।”

In the Kalikā paṇṇāṇa, उड्डियान, पूर्णगिरि and कामाख्या are mentioned as places where different portion of Sati's body fell: and I should add that, although it is not mentioned in the Kālikāpurāṇā, a portion of the body (Viz. the neck) fell in Srihatta.—

ग्रीवा पपात श्रीहटे सर्वसिद्धि प्रदायिनी ।

देवीतत्र महालक्ष्मीः सर्वानन्दश्च भैरवः ॥⁽⁴⁾

(1) The spelling here is noticeable: does it not remind Yuan Chwang's Shih-li-cha-talo which some (including my humble self) would identify with Sylhet? [The separate mention of Srihatta and Kāmārūpa here is also noticeable, as it proves in a manner that Sylhet did not form part of Kāmārūpa even then.

(2) P. 46 J. R. A. S. vol. ii no. 2.

(3) As, I regret, I have not the original book before me.

(4) Vide Srihatter Itivritta-Vol i, chap. 9 p. 108. (This is mentioned also in the Bengali poem "Annadā Mangal"—written about 200 years ago).

Apparently this was known to the author of *Sādhana-mātā*—though not mentioned in the *Kālikā-purāṇa*. (1)

Now, in the above extract from the *Sādhana-mātā* direction has been apparently made to worship certain adorable objects (including sacred places or pithas) and the *mantras* are given in the other extract:—

“ॐ महासुखं ब्रह्म पुष्पे स्वाहा, ॐ उड्डियानं ब्रह्म पुष्पे स्वाहा, ॐ पुर्णगिरि
ब्रह्म पुष्पे स्वाहा, ॐ कामरूपं ब्रह्म पुष्पे स्वाहा मध्ये ॐ श्रीहट्टं ब्रह्म पुष्पे स्वाहा ।
पूर्णमध्ये—ॐ नमः सर्वं सुखं बोधिसत्त्वं ब्रह्म पुष्पे स्वाहा ।”

‘*Vajrayāna*’ is a compromise that the decaying (and vanquished) Buddhism made with the Hindu Tantras: yet, also, this attempt at galvanizing the dying faith did not avail anything—it had to go and it has gone.

So, those extracts are no proofs that Buddhism ever flourished in *Kāmarupa* or in *Śrīhatta*. (2)

SOME SANSKRIT MANUSCRIPTS FOUND IN KAMRUP.

(BY : S. C. GOSWAMI.)

—o—

It is well known that Nalbari has been the most famous centre of Sanskrit learning in Assam. His Excellency Sir Michael Keane paid a visit in November 1934 to the *Kāmarupa* Sanskrit Sanjibani Sabha, Nalbari. The Sabha took this opportunity to welcome His Excellency with an address; and also to organise on the occasion an exhibition of Sanskrit manuscripts.

(1) I must state that the enumeration of the Pithas differs, in different books: a solution has been attempted in the *Viśwakosha* (q. v. पीठ).

(2) It may not be out of place to state here that while following the materials for the compilation of the “*Śrīhatta Itivṛtta*” nothing could be found to show that there was any trace of Buddhism in Sylhet.

The main object of the Exhibition was to draw attention of His Excellency, the Government and the educated public to the wealth of Sanskrit lore in possession of the Kāmrupia pandits which for want of patronage and financial support is getting wasted.

In the days of the Kāmarupa-Kings, like Maharaja Nara-nārāyana, Swargadeos Rudra Sinha, Siba-Singha and Rajeswar Sinha and others, Sanskrit learning in this country flourished to a great extent. This will be evident from the short note about the exhibition given in the following paragraphs.

The management of the Exhibition was entrusted to a committee consisting of the following members :—

1. Sjt. Joydev Sarma B. A.	...	Secretary
2. „ Hareswar Sarma B. A.	...	Member
3. Pandit Sreekanta Bhattacharyya		
Vyakarantirtha, Kavyabinode	...	„
4. Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Śāstri	...	„
5. Pandit Bhagavan Chandra Goswami		
Kavya Vyakarantirtha	...	„
6. Pandit Nara-narayan Goswami		
Vyakarantirtha	„	„
7. Pandit Harendra Nath Śāstri	...	„

The committee worked under the guidance of Pandit Pratap Chandra Deva Adhikar Goswami Vidyabhisarad, President of the Sanskrit Sanjibani Sabha.

More than one thousand manuscripts written on either birch-bark (Sanchi-pat) or Tulapat with indelible Sanchi ink were collected for the Exhibition. The collection consisted of manuscripts treating of various subjects of Sanskrit studies—Smṛiti, Vyakarana, Kavya, Astrology, Rhetoric &c.

It may be noted that only a small part of the large number of manuscripts in possession of many families could be collected.

A short description of a few of the interesting manuscripts discovered is given below :—

A. LITERATURE.

1. Dharmodaya Nataka (a drama)
composed in 1692 Saka or 1770 A. D. in the
days of the Ahom King Swargadeo Rajeswar

Sinha by Pandit Dharmadev Goswami of Kaihati Satra.

2. & 3. The same author composed two other works, namely:—

Dharmodaya Kavya and Narakasur Vijaya Kavya.

4. Sree-Sree Haridev Charita (a biography) by Pandit Baneswar Goswami Siddhanta-Bagish of Kaihati Satra.

5. Kumarharan Natak (a drama) composed under orders of the Ahom King Swargadeo Siva Singha (1714-1744 A. D.)

6. Chittamodakhya Kavya by Mahamahopadhyaya Baidyanath Bachasati-Bhattacharyya.

- A. 7. Keecchaka Badha Kavya
by Mahakavi Nitidharma.

B. COMMENTARIES · TIKA OR BHASYA ON KAVYAS

- 7 & 8. Sara-Manjari or Commentary on Kiratarjuniya and Sishupal Badha Kavyas.
by Ratnagarbhbhācharyya.

9. Commentary on Magha-kavya (Shishupal-Badha)
by Bhabadatta.

10. Commentary on Naishadha-Kavya,
by Dwijendra.

C. WORKS ON SMRITI.

11. Haralata (a code on Smriti)
by Anirudha Bhatta—copied in 1680 Saka or 1758 A. D.

12. Bibada-Kaumudi—
by Pitambar Sidhanta-Bagish (1520 Saka) author of 26 codes on.
Smriti, some of which have been published.

13. **Nabanita** (a code on Smṛiti)
by Chandra Kandali.
14. **Barsha-Bhaskar** (a code on Smṛiti)
by Samblunath Miśra, author of eleven other
codes on Smṛiti.
15. **Sambandha Nirṇaya** (Smṛiti)
by Gopal Chandra Sarma Panchanan
(1490 Saka or 1568 A. D.)
16. **Nirṇaya Sindhu** (A code on Smṛiti)
by Kamalakar.
17. **Barshakṛitya** (a code on Smṛiti)
by Gaurinath Sarma.
18. **Purnachandra** (a code on Smṛiti)
by Ripunjay, some part has been published.
19. **Asouch-Chandrika**
by Brahmananda Miśra.

D. TANTRA.

20. **Annada Kalpa** (A Tantra)
by Bhairabananda (13th Century composition
transcribed in 1702 Saka).
21. **Britti Sangraha** (A Tantra)
by Tantra Siromoni Dharma Dhananjaya Bhatta-
charyya of Ramdiya.
Original copy written in 1578 Saka or 1665 A. D.

E. LEXICON, GRAMMAR, RHETORIC.

22. **Harabali**—a lexicon (1490 Saka or 1568 A. D.)
composed by Mahamahopadhyaya Purusottam
Vidya-Bagish, author of *Prayog-Ratna-mala*.
23. **Kṛit Pradīpikā**—
Commentary on the Kṛit chapter of Ratnamala
Vyākaran,
by Ruchinath Sarma, composed in 1745 Saka or
1828 A. D.

24. **Brittamala** (a treatise on Chhandas)
by Kavi Karnapura composed in the reign of Maharaja Nara Narayan, Recently published by the Kāmarupa Sanskrit Sanjibani Sabha at the expense of Sjt. S. C. Goswami.
25. **Prayog-Ratnamala Vyakaran**
composed in the days of Maharaja Nara Narayan with the following commentaries :—
(a) **Krit-Pradipika**—
by Mahendra Sarmopadhyaya.
(b) **Panjika**
by Jibeswar Sarmopadhyaya.
(c) **Prabha-Prakasika**
by Jaykrishna Sarmopadhyaya.

F. MISCELLANEOUS.

26. **Bhakti Viveka** (a treatise on the Bhakti cult)
by Acharyya Bhattadev.
27. **Raja Ballabha**—
a treatise on Health and Hygiene by Mahamahopadhyaya Narayan Das, the royal physician of the renowned Ahom King Rudra Sinha. Recently published by Kaviraj Taranath Chakravarty Kavya-vinode.
28. **Yoton-Jyotishnika** (a treatise on Astrology)
by Janmejaya Upadhyaya.

G. OTHER INTERES.ING MANUSCRIPTS.

29. **Bhagabat.**
This manuscript was brought from Nepal.
It is written on palm leaves.
30. **Bhagabata** (9th Skandha)
a manuscript in the handwriting of Rama Saraswati the celebrated poet of the Court of Maharaja Nara-Narayan (1540-1584 A. D.)

The above list contains the names of only a few typical works composed by Kamarupi Pandits and not yet published or

known to scholars. But even these few are enough to indicate the range and depth of Sanskrit learning which once flourished in Assam. There are hundreds of manuscripts of Bhagabat, Geeta, Prayog Ratnamala Byakaran, many works on Smriti and other Kavyas and Nataks which have been published.

This wealth of learning and literature deserves to be studied. But the most important thing is its preservation. If it is not preserved now, much of it will be lost in a few years, as much more must have been lost are this. So that immediate action is necessary.

I hope this note will attract the notice of scholars outside Assam. If any of them wants to know more of these manuscripts I shall be happy to supply more particulars. Perhaps the authorities of some Oriental Series may be sufficiently interested to publish some of these works. If so all facilities to them will be provided.

S. C. Goswami,
Inspector of Schools Jorhat,
Assam.

VAISHNAVISM IN KAMARUPA

(BY MOHAN CHANDRA MAHANTA, B.L.)

—:0.—

The attention of the present writer has lately been drawn to an article under the above caption from the pen of no less a person than Sjt. Sarat Chandra Goswami, B. A. in this Journal (Vol. I, No. 2). In that article the writer has done possibly the greatest injustice to a very important Vaishnava sect in Assam namely, the Kāla-Samhati (কাল সমষ্টি) by grossly misrepresenting it. A darker picture of the sect could hardly be expected from any pen. A correction to the article by the author, written as a result of protests by a distinguished Adhikar Goswami appeared in this Journal (Vol. 1, No. 3) but it has hardly improved the matter. A sect which has to its credit the foundation of the historically important Raj-Satra Dehing which is possibly the most respectable satra among all the Kayastha satras, of Assam, in addition to many respectable Brahman satras. such as Ahataguri, Korotipar, Khouramochar, Tanolbari, etc. deserves to be treated with fairness. The work of a research scholar resembles that of an impartial judge who must weigh the force of evidence on both the sides of a point at issue before passing

a conclusive remark. If Mr. Goswami's research work on the subject had to be confined to the hearsays of "ordinary Bhakats" (vide the correction referred to above) then he ought to have listened to the Bhakats in the centre of the prominent *satras* of the sect. But a careful perusal of the article and its correction leads us to believe that the author attempted to deliver a message of Gargaon without going to that city (नगै गङ्गावर बातरि कोषा) as the Assamese adage goes. That the article itself needs revision is eloquently said by the foot-note remarks of the learned editor of the Journal.

The *Kāla-Samhati* has been portrayed in the darkest colour to represent as it were, all the rubbishes of Vaishnavism in Assam. Indeed the word "Kāla" as it appears in the name or the Samhati is interpreted by Mr. Goswami to denote "dark" (Vide his correction), relying on his authority the "ordinary Bhakats." He says that "Kāla and Krishna are the names of the same Samhati to which the general body of Dissenters belonged." The name Krishna Samhati is nowhere to be found in any good literature on the subject except in the article of Mr. Goswami. In their usual euphemistic language of the "ordinary Bhakats" who are apt to Sanskritise Assamese proper names just as Bardowa as Batadrawa, Bānhbari as Bāusabari, Letugaon as Lettugram, etc., they might have spelt Kāla-Samhati as Krishna-Samhati, but Kāla-Samhati is the name properly applied to the sect. The word Kāla-Samhati has a historical as well as a geographical significance and the meaning of "Kāla" is not to be construed here as "dark" or "mysterious" as the learned writer holds it to be.

The Kāla-Samhati was founded by Mahapurush Gopal Dev, popularly known as Bhowansepuria Gopal Ata, one of the most favourite apostles of Mahapurush Malhav Dev. Gopal Ata had 12 principal disciples, six Brahmins and six non-Brahmins and almost all of them founded different *satras*, such as Abhataguri, Bānhbari (Dibing), Māyāmorā, Nagariā, Gajalā, etc., etc., the number of which *satras* now probably exceeds a hundred throughout Assam. The name Kāla-Samhati (काल-संहति) owes its origin to "Kāljbār" (काल-जार) the main *satra* of Gopal Dev. The place is situated in lower Assam, Barpeta Subdivision, and is still known by that name. In the latest Assamese lexicography, the Chandra Kānta-Abhidhān, published under the auspices of the Assam Sahitya Sabhā, the derivation of the word Kāla-Samhati is given as follows—काल-संहति [काल-कालजार=

गोपाल आतार सत्र+संहति=सम्प्रदाय] वि, गोपाल आतार मते चला महापुरुषीया सम्प्रदाय, (i. e. Kāla—Kālazar—Gopal Ata's satra, and *Samhati*—community, meaning “the party of Mahapurushias following the tenets of Gopal Ata”). This I hold to be reasonably correct. Mr. Goswami groups certain sects under the heading “The Dissenters” the general body of whom he subsequently identifies as Kāla-Samhati or Krishna-Samhati. Nowhere in his article we can find the names of the “formidable dissenters” who are described as “all powerful Sishyas of Sankar Dev.” To describe the Kāla-Samhati without its founder Gopal Dev is to make an image without its soul. Nothing could be further from truth than to say that Gopal Dev dissented from his *guru* Madhav Dev. Kāla-Samhati was not founded by any “powerful Sishya of Sankar Dev” but by one of the most favourite principal disciples of Madhav Dev. Perhaps no other apostle of Madhav Dev could excel Gopal Dev in paying the most devoted and sincere obeisance to his spiritual benefactor. Gopal Dev was a poet, a dramatist and a popular speaker. Throughout all his writings, following the foot-steps of his guru, he deifies his spiritual benefactor Madhav Dev to the emmence of God Himself and from his writings as well as from his biographies it is definitely known that instead of being a “Dissenter” he was a staunch devotee of Madhav Dev. To satisfy the curiosity of the readers I quote below some pertinent portions from his writings:—

नमो शङ्कर देव माधव सहिते दुवौ
 मोर इष्ट देव दुइ जन ।
 माधवर शिक्षा धरि शुद्धभावे भजो हरि
 बन्दो हेन भक्तर चरण ॥
 माधव माधव प्राण माधव माधव आत्मा
 माधव माधव गुरु इष्ट ।
 माधव माधव नाम सुमरणे सुमङ्गल
 माधवे से इष्टदेव निष्ट ॥—घोषा-(७ गोपाल देव)
 माधवर चरण रेणु शिरे परशिया
 दीन गोपाले एहु भने ।—जन्मयात्रा नाट्य गीत-
 (७ गोपालदेव)

The number of similar quotations may be multiplied. As we cannot conceive of Madhav Dev without Sankar Dev so

we can not conceive of Gopal Dev without Madhav Dev. From the stanzas quoted above it appears that Gopal Dev ascribes a much superior position to his immediate guru Madhav Dev than that to his guru Sankar Dev. This was mainly the reason why the followers of Gopal Dev were differently treated by other Mahapurushias, and in course of time the principle underlying this difference began to distinguish the Kāla-Samhati from other Mahapurushia sects. It is wrong to bring Gopal Dev or his sect under the heading "The Dissenters" and the reasons ascribed by Mr. Goswami to the so-called dissenters, namely, that they "dissented from opposite motives : Some saying that Madhav Dev was too puritanic in his methods, and others that he was giving too much liberty to his Bhakats", for forming into a separate sect known as the Kāla-Samhati, have no legs to stand upon.

Mr. Goswami specifies only one instance of the so-called dissenters of whom, he says, "the most important are the Moāmoriās, better known as Mataks, ***** Many of them are Mongloid people of Upper Assam". The Moāmoriā sect was founded by Aniruddha Dev, one of the twelve principal disciples of Gopal Dev (Bhawaneeपुरia Gopal Ata) and he was of pure Kayastha origin.

Mr. Goswami characterises the Kāla-Samhati as having some "secret rites introduced in time in some of them", and enumerates two instances, first the Rātikhowā Bhakats or the Night-worshippers, and secondly the Gopidharās and says that the former are the most important of the secret sects and that the latter are another important secret sect. As regards the Rātikhowās we are referred to his article entitled "The Night Worshipers" published in 1920. In that article however it is mentioned that the Night Worshipers belong to the Kāla-Samhati. There he speaks of one Gopal Ata as the originator of the sect commonly known as the Rāti-Khowā-Bhakats, but Mr. Goswami distinguishes this Gopal Ata from Bhawaneeपुरia Gopal Ata the well-known originator of the Kāla-Samhati by saying that "this Gopal Ata is not to be confounded with the Bhawanipuria Gopal Ata of whom so much is written in the biographies of Sankar Dev". While warning others not to confound the two Gopal Atas it seems the writer himself jumps into the pitfall of the gravest mistake. We are told that the Rāti-khowā-Bhakats are to be found in other Samhatas as well, and the Rāti-Khowā system can never be a distinguishing feature of the Kāla-Samhati.

As regards the Gopidharās, I can assure Mr. Goswami that

if any sect of Vaishnavism in Assam is immune from the adulteration commonly known as the Gopidhariā Bhakti, then it is the Kāla-Samhati where the so-called Gopis (women devotees) have very little or no chance of mixing with the male devotees at the time of initiation, prayer, or worship. In the Kāla-Samhati the place of the guru is held to be supreme, and faithfully following the mandates of the Hindu scriptures and teachings of Sankar Dev and his successor Madhav Dev who are known to have refused to acknowledge the guruship of women, this sect recognises nobody except the husband as the guru of the softer sex. Indeed the religious status of women in it is peculiar: the system of initiating the women by the gurus, viz., the Gossains and Mahantas as it is customary with other Samhatis is not to be found in the Kāla-Samhati, and not even the system of Nām-prasanga (common prayer) by the Gopis is prevalent in this sect. We are told that the Gopidhariā Bhakti originates and strives in Samhatis other than the one stigmatised by the learned research scholar whose further inquiries are sure to reveal the fact. The Gopidhariā system is an offshoot of the system of worship of Lord Krishna based on the divine conjugal love of the Gopis with the Lord and this adulterated system is likely to find its way from Bengal.

Another sect which is brought by Mr. Goswami under the heading "The Dissenters" is "the most puritanic sect the Tāmol-Nokhowā Bhakats". This sect as such is also disclaimed by the Kāla-Samhati.

Mr. Goswami concludes the objectionable section of his article by making a grossly misleading remark about the Dihingiās whom he states to "have some peculiar custom of their own", and as "the most striking" instance of such "peculiar custom" he cites the cremation ground of the Adhikar which place he afterwards (vide the correction) calls "than". The Dibing Satra truly belongs to the Kāla-Samhati. Its founder was Jadumani Dev or the Bara Atā who was the principal Kayastha disciple of Bhowaneepuria Gopal Ata. Mr. Goswami seems to labour under a very wrong impression that the *thāns* of the Dihingiās which are "regarded as sacred place "or" places of pilgrimage" are the cremation grounds of the deceased Adhikars. Had they been so several *thāns* in different places throughout the Assam Valley could not have been dedicated to the same guru. These *thāns* should not be confounded with Agni-thāns, i. e., the cremation grounds. The Dihingiās have no doubt *agni-thāns* of their deceased gurus like many

other *satras* of other Samhatis, and hence it can not be called a peculiarity of this *satra*. These *Agni-thāns* are regarded with the same solemnity as elsewhere. What may appear to be a peculiarity with this *satra* is that it has a number of *thāns* almost in all the subdivisions of the Assam valley quite distinct from the *Agni-thāns*. These are *thāns* in the sense in which Barpetá, Sundaridiá, etc., are called *thāns* and in no other sense. The word *thān* is a derivative of sanskrit *sthāna* meaning place. The particular places in which the Mahapurusha guru used to live, afterwards came to be regarded as sacred places by the devotees. After the departure of the guru from this world, the Bhakats specialise the particular place or places of their guru, generally the elevated grounds called the Bhetis (altars) upon which the guru used to sit at the time of preaching, erect a shed over there, and the *pādukās* or the sandals worn by the late guru are installed there. The *śrāddha* ceremonies or the death anniversaries are celebrated there and the disciples of the guru pay their usual homage to the guru towards these *thāns*. This custom of worshipping the sandals of the guru is said to have its sanction in the *Rāmáyana* as well as in the *Sreemadbhāgavata*. In the former epic it is found that Bharata installed the sandals of Rama on the throne in absence of the latter, and in the *Bhāgavata* it is stated that Uddhavá used to worship the sandals of Sree Krishna after the latter's departure. This mode of paying obeisance to the late guru is in vogue in many other parts of India. Such *pādukā thāns* (which are known as *Kāryar thān* or the *thān* of action) are regarded as the places of pilgrimage or sacred places by the Dihingiās and it will be a great mistake if we confuse these *thāns* with *Agni-thāns* i. e. the cremation place.

AMHERST COLLECTION OF ASSAM COINS

(BY. K. L. BARUA.)

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This collection of coins in a beautiful, mahogany cabinet together with Dr. Horace Hayman Wilsons note on these coins in original, written in the year 1828, have just been acquired by me on behalf of the Assam Coin Committee. Shortly after

the cession of Assam to the British, in accordance with the treaty of Yandabu, Captain Neufville collected these coins and presented them to the Countess of Amherst. Dr. Wilson, who was then the Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, was asked to write a short note on the history of Assam and the coins collected. This original note of Dr. Wilson, bearing his autograph signature, is a valuable historical document. It shows that very little of the history of Assam was then known to oriental scholars. For the early history of Assam Dr. Wilson depends largely on the work of Dr. Buchanan published in England under the title of "Annals of oriental Literature." This book is now rare.

This collection with the mahogany cabinet and Dr. Wilson's note was put up to Sotheby's auction on the 30th of July 1934. Mr. Stapleton, formerly Director of Public Instruction Bengal, who is a wellknown numismatist, happened to be then in London. He bought the collection on behalf of the Assam Coin committee and handed over the cabinet and Dr. Wilson's original note to me recently. The Shillong Cabinet no doubt possesses coins of all the Ahom Kings but not of all the mints. This collection contains coins of mints not possessed by the Shillong cabinet. Besides it includes a Tippera coin of "Śrī Śrijit Rājadhara Mānikya Dev" of Saka year 1707.

REVIEWS.

BOOKS.

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Racial Affinities of the Peoples of India—By Dr. B. S. Guha, Ph. D., Anthropologist, Zoological Survey of India. —This is the Ethnographical Part of the Indian Census Report of 1931. This is a valuable work based on detailed anthropometric investigations carried out by Dr. Guha himself and certain other qualified experts which bears out the theory of the racial composition of the peoples of India set forth by Dr. Hutton in his main report "Census of India, 1931, vol. I, Part I" which was reviewed by me in this Journal (J. A. R. S. vol. I No. IV).

Arranged according to time and beginning from the earliest age the various racial strains in India can be enumerated as follows :—

(1) A Negrito type of dark pigmy strain which appears to have been displaced and partially absorbed by the ancestors of the existing aborigines of India. In a comparatively pure form the Andamanese of the present day represent this type.

(2) The non-Negritoid strain known as "Proto-Australoid" and called "Nisadic" by Dr. Guha. This type is found largely in the present day Indian aborigines. It is this type which is largely responsible for the dark-complexioned and flat-nosed elements in the population of India.

(3) The Mediterranean type. This is a short-statured long-headed element with high cranial vault and medium lips. The nose is prominent and long giving a Mesorrhine index. The Telegu Brahmans are representatives of this type which forms the predominant element in the greater part of the population of the whole of Northern India. The Telegu Brahmans are racially akin to the Pods of Bengal, the Oriya Brahmans, the Kanarese Brahmans, the Saraswat Brahmans, the Chippavan Brahmans and the Desistha Brahmans of Western India.

(4) The Alpine type super-imposed on the basic elements in Western and Eastern India. This is a brachycephalic element of medium stature with flattened occiput having also a high head and not infrequently a receding forehead. The nose is long and highly pitched but quite often arched and convex. The skin colour varies from pale white to tawney brown. The Nagar-Brahmans of Guzerat, the Bengali Kayasthas and the Bengali Brahmans, having a slightly longish head, are closely related to them.

(5) The Vedic Aryan type—A long-headed strain with comparatively lower but longer head and tall stature and possessing a long face and prominent narrow long nose. In its purest form it is found in the North-West Himalayan tribes like the Kaffirs and the Pathans where the skin colour is predominantly of a rosy white tint and an appreciable number have grey blue eyes and chestnut hair. The Sikhs of the Punjab and the U. P. Brahmans also belong to this type but in their case the skin colour has been changed into a light transparent brown. The Nambadri Brahmans and the Nairs of Southern India approach this type more than the highest castes in other parts of India.

(6) The Mongoloid type—This is a brachycephalic strain with the usual Mongolian characteristics such as the oblique eyes and the epicanthic fold. This type is found among the hill-tribes of Assam and in Northern Bengal.

Dr. Guha admits the possibility that the two longheaded strains (3) and (5) may have been evolved out of a common ancestral stock but were differentiated very early. The Mediterranean strain was the earlier drift of this race which reached India several thousands of years before the later Vedic Aryan drift came to India. On the other hand, between the two brachycephal strains (4) and (6) there is no common ground besides the broad head. Other somatic characters differentiate them completely and clearly they belong to two different racial strains. The Alpine type is responsible for non-Mongoloid brachycephaly in Bengal and the Western coast. The slightly longer head of the Bengali Brahmans is perhaps due to intermixture with later Vedic Aryan immigrants. On their entry into India the Alpines left traces not only of their Pisachi language in the North-West frontier but also their blood in the Khos of Chitral who are therefore racially akin to the Bengali high castes and the people of the Western coast.

Dr. Guha writes that "of the Assamese proper of the Brahmaputra valley we have no metric data excepting six Kalitas measured by Waddell. In the absence of reliable measurements, it is impossible to determine how far they are racially allied to the neighbouring people of Bengal and Bihar". Dr. Hutton however thinks that the non-Mongoloid elements in the Brahmaputra valley such as the Brahmans, Kayasthas and Kalitas are perhaps racially allied to the high castes of Orissa who belong mostly to the Mediterranean stock *. On Waddell's measurements of the six Kalitas they appear to be Meso-cephals as a result of intermixture perhaps with the Alpine brachycephals from Bengal. It is not unlikely that the Assamese Brahmans most of whom are originally of Maithil and Kanaujia stock, will, if measured, show a longer head than the Bengali Brahman though it is found from epigraphic evidence that a colony of Nagar-Brahmans (Alpines) were settled at Kāmarupa as early as the fifth century A. D. The Kāmarupa kings appear to have patronised them and the

* Census of India.

Assamese language with its distinct Pisachi characteristics, seem to be of Alpine origin like Bengali, Guzerati, Sindhi, Marathi, Konkani, Khowari and Kasmiri. Language is no index of racial origin or affinity but there is hardly any doubt that Alpine blood has largely entered into the composition of the Assamese non-Mongoloid castes forming the higher order of society.

The fact seems to be that the Mediterraneans and the Alpines had their own priestly classes* like the Vedic Brahmins. During historic times, if not earlier, Vedic Brahmins were imported into various parts of India. They mixed with the local priests and gave rise to the hybrid types of the present day. By Patanjali's time in the second century B. C., the Brahmins in the various parts of India had become so mixed that he found it necessary to distinguish real Aryan Brahmins from others by laying down the true somatic characters of the former such as *Gaura Varna* (white complexion), *Kapila Kesa* (chestnut hair) and blue eyes which are essentially the somatic characters of Nordic Aryans. The three main racial types composing the high castes of India at the present day viz Mediterraneans, Alpines and Aryans are now to be found in a comparatively pure form in the Telugu Brahmins, representing the Mediterraneans, the Nagar Brahmins and the Bengali Kayasthas, representing the Alpines and the Pathans, Sikhs and U. P. Brahmins representing the Aryans.

The Mediterraneans are believed to have been the authors of the Chalcolithic civilization disclosed at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, the Alpines introduced a culture in Eastern India largely borrowed from the Aryan culture in Iran and lastly the Aryans coming through the Punjab introduced the Vedic culture and gradually brought about a synthesis of the three cultures. About the time of the Buddha this synthesis was complete.

K. L. Barua.

* Of the term *Desastha* Brahman which literally means indigenous Brahmins or priests.

NOTICE.

KĀMARUPA ANUSANDHAN SAMITI, GAUHATI.

The Kāmarupa Anusandhan Samiti, or the Assam Research Society, has a collection of old historical relics, such as inscribed stones and images, cannons, cannon-balls, swords, potteries, *puthis*, royal costumes, coins, etc. The premises of the Samiti, situated on the southern bank of Dighali Tank, Gauhati, remains open from 7-30 to 9-30 A.M. and 3 to 7 P.M. on working days ; from 8 to 7 P.M. on Sundays and on Doljatra, Lakshmi-puja, and the anniversaries of Damodar Deb, Sankar Deb, and Madhab Deb. The Samiti remains closed on the following occasions :—Sri-panchami, Maghbihu, Bahagbihu, Id-duz-zaha, Maharam, Janmas-tami, Durgapuja, Kalipuja, Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, King-Emperor's Birth-day and Sivaratri.

Information which may lead to the recovery of any historical relic or article will be thankfully received.

D. GOSWAMI.

Honorary Secretary,

Kāmarupa Anusandhan Samiti.